The Biſhop of *SARUM*'s

SERMON

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Right Honourable the Lady *BROOK*.

Imprimatur,

Z. Isham, R. P. D.
Henrico Epiſc.
Lond. à Sacris.

Feb. 21. 169½.

A

SERMON

PREACHED at the

FUNERAL

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

ANNE,

Lady-Dowager BROOK.

Who was Buried at *Breamor*, the 19*th* day of *February*, 169$\frac{1}{1}$.

By the Right Reverend Father in God, *GILBERT*, Lord Bishop of *SARUM*.

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PROV. xxxi. 30, 31.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praiſe her in the gates.

THE General Lamentations which the ſad Occaſion of this preſent Aſſembly has raiſed over this whole Countrey, as in a common Calamity, where every one bears a ſhare, becauſe ſo many do feel it, have ſo far prevented me in all that can be ſaid to the praiſe of her, whoſe *Remains* are now to be laid up in the belief of the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*, at which time they are to be reſtored to her again, that I am very ſenſible it is not neceſſary to ſay any thing concerning her, for the raiſing among you the eſteem that is due to her Memory, which is, and muſt be long very dear to you all. But as there is ſome diſadvantage in ſpeaking what is

proper on this Subject, before thoſe who knew her well, and ſo will think that I am as reſerved in commending her, as ſhe her ſelf was in hiding her own Worth, and in concealing thoſe *Works* which do now *praiſe her*; yet on the other hand I ſpeak with the more aſſurance, becauſe it is in the Countrey where ſhe ſpent ſo many of her years. I ſhould be afraid to ſay all that I have reſolv'd on, if it were in the Audience of ſuch as had been Strangers to the Courſe of her Life: It is a nice and tender thing to praiſe, eſpecially in this Vicious and corrupted Age, in which ſo many are concerned to keep themſelves in Countenance, and to decry a Virtue that muſt needs make their Vices ſhew more foul and odious; and who cannot bear what is due to others, becauſe they know that it does not belong to themſelves. And it muſt be confeſſed, that exceſſive Commendations on theſe Occaſions, in compliance with Cuſtom, and the tenderneſs that ſeems then decent, where Flattery is thought more excuſable, becauſe the Perſon commended does not receive it; theſe, I ſay, have given but too much reaſon to diſregard what is ſaid in diſcourſes of this kind, in which it paſſes for a ſort of rudeneſs not to exceed, and for an unkindneſs to the Friends

Friends of the Dead, not to praiſe out of meaſure. But I am leſs in pain to enlarge upon this Subject, when I have ſo many Vouchers before me, and when I am to ſpeak of things that have been ſo long the Obſervation of all theſe parts. I will uſe as little art in Speaking, as She did in Living; and will ſtudy to dreſs up a Memorial for her, with ſuch a decent Simplicity, as ſhe uſed in the dreſſing her Perſon, which as ſhe did in haſte, ſo I will be as ſhort as may be. I will for ſome time interrupt my ſpeaking of her, and conſider the Text I have read to you, that ſo I may return with the more advantage to proſecute what I have now begun.

This Chapter is a Poetical Compoſure; it is an *Accroſtick* in the *Hebrew*, according to the Cuſtom of that time, for the help of the Memory. Every Verſe, from the 10th to the end, begins with a new Letter of the Alphabet in their order. It is to little purpoſe to examine, whether the King, called *Lemuel*, to whom it is addreſſed, be *Solomon* under a diſguiſed deſignation, or not; and whether it was a Poem made by his Mother, directing him how to chuſe a Wife, and giving him a full

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Character of the Excellencies of a good one, ſuitable to the Simplicy of thoſe Ages and Places, in which Women of the higheſt Rank, and even Queens themſelves, managed their own Domeſtick Concerns; or if it was a Compoſition of *Solomon's*, ſetting forth, with many enlargements of Poeſy, the Advices that his Mother had given him; or if he only brings in the Perſon of his Mother, to make his Poetry look more Natural. It is to very little purpoſe to enquire into all this, and not poſſible to determine any part of it: Certain it is, that we have here a very noble and Elegant Deſcription, of a faithful and affectionate, a diſcreet and an induſtrious Wife; who as ſhe applied her chief care to the concerns of her Husband and Children, ſo neglected not any of her Houſhold-Affairs; ſhe riſe early, and ſate up late; wrought with her own hands, and looked to the ways of her Houſhold; ſhe took care that her whole Family ſhould be well imployed; ſhe was an honour as well as a help to her Husband: Her whole behaviour was both prudent and obliging; *She opened her mouth with wiſdom*, not to evil ſpeaking, nor idle talking; and *in her tongue*

tongue was the law of kindneſs; an exact, but engaging decency.

All this is concluded with a ſhort ſong, in which her Husband and Children ſhould celebrate her Praiſes, which, as it is probable, was to be ſung among them by turns, according to the way of the *Eaſtern* Muſick: The firſt might begin, *Many daughters have done vertuouſly*; and to this another might anſwer, *But thou excelleſt them all*: Then one might ſing, *Favour is deceitful*; another, *Beauty is vain*: And both together, *But the woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed*: Then one might ſing, *Give her*, and another anſwer, *of the fruit of her hands*; and then both together, and *Let her own works praiſe her in the gates*. There is a plain Intimation given of the cuſtom that was among the *Jews* to ſing this Song by turns, on two of their great Solemnities in the *Miſna* *.

* Treat. of Feſts, c. 4. n. 6.

By *Favour*, is to be meant all that is inſinuating in a Womans Humour, Manner, and Converſation, by which a Husband may be charmed: This is often *deceitful*, and under it a great deal of Diſloyalty and Treachery is both hid and managed; theſe Arts being ſo many Practices upon the eaſie Husband, to deceive and blind him, to impoſe any thing upon him, and to obtain every thing

from him. Therefore, tho a lively Air, a graceful Behaviour, a ſoft Manner, a Pleaſantneſs of Humour, and an entertaining Converſation, are very valuable Qualities, and have Powerful Charms in them, yet all this may be *deceitful*; much baſeneſs and falſhood may be under them; ſo that this ſingly cannot make a good Character.

Beauty is vain; this which ſtrikes the eye, as the other does the Imagination, is yet ſlighter, it is often falſe, eſpecially in the Eaſt where beauty is as oft the work of Art, as of Nature, and it had been well if that practice had remained in the *Eaſt* ſtill, and had not come into theſe *Weſtern* parts; but ſuppoſe the Beauty to be both true and exact, *it is vain* in many other reſpects: It does not always lodge a pure Soul, which does often contract the more deformity, becauſe it dwells within a beautiful Figure, that but too often feeds pride, and is ſet off with Vanity, which both draws admiration and delights in it: it does inſenſibly diſſolve the mind into voluptuouſneſs, and in the end intangle it into many ſnares, and expoſe it to much Sin. It is *Vain* in another reſpect, it is ſubject to many accidents which may blaſt it, and if it eſcapes theſe, yet it muſt yield at laſt and fade with Age, if by the precipitated

pitated waſtings of Nature and other diſorders, it does not fall ſooner. Theſe words run thus in the *Hebrew*, *Favour*, *Falſhood*, *Beauty*, *Vanity*, and perhaps every one of theſe was to be ſung by turns as the anſwer to the other.

Theſe are the two things by which that Sex is chiefly recommended to thoſe who make ſlight and haſty Judgments, and that do often perceive their error when it is too late to correct it: but that upon which a true one can only be formed, lies in the words that follow ----*But the woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed*. The fear of a diſcovery, and of ſhame; the fear of a Husband, and the apprehenſions of his diſpleaſure, are but feeble principles: they may reſtrain one at ſome times, and from ſome temptations, but it is only the *fear of God* that ſubdues the heart, that ſhoots its influence into the ſecreteſt ſprings of our actions, that overcomes the ſtrongeſt inclinations, even in their firſt and inviſible motions: this ſets a Law, not only to one's actions, but to his very thoughts: The conduct of the outward part of life, when that is contradicted by the wiſhes and deſires which are allowed a free range within, is but a conſtraint, and the acting of a part which is not

natural; and nothing that is an affected force upon Nature can be either easy or lasting. Nature will be always at some time or other too hard for Rule and Form. And even a Firm Resolution will soon grow heavy and will at last be forgotten, if there are not principles formed within, that give it a root, and afford it nourishment: therefore Vertue can have no settled basis nor foundation, unless its bottom be the *true fear of God*, a secret sence of a supream and perfect mind, that sees all we do, and that will judge us at last according to all that we have done. When this is lodged in the most retired corners of our Hearts; when the sense of it returns often upon us, to acquit or to condemn us; when we measure our selves and all our actions by our conformity to this Eternal Being; when we reckon it our supreme and only happiness, to become like unto it, and accepted of it; when no exercises become more delighting to us, than our Meditating of its Perfections, and of all the discoveries that it has made of it self; and when upon these Contemplations the mind grows to love and adore that Being, and to prostrate it self often before it, and dedicate it self entirely to serve and please it in all things,

things, Then Virtue has a true faſtning within, to which it cleaves, and which will ſupport and ſtrengthen it: And indeed Virtue, and the Fear of God do ſo mutually maintain one another, that theſe who are equally Enemies to both, know that the rooting out the one, will ſoon draw the other after it. The Prophane Tribe of *Libertines* does chiefly hate Religion, becauſe Virtue does ever accompany it; they find it often in their way, and wiſh there were as little of it in the World, as they feel in their own Breaſts: but it were too barefaced a thing to endeavour to ſtrike both at *Virtue* and *Religion* at once. There is a ſound in *Vertue* that carries Majeſty with it, and commands the eſteem of the whole World, ſo ſuch as hate it, know that they muſt take care not to diſcover that too ſoon, leſt they ſhould draw a general Indignation upon themſelves. But *Religion* they think may be more ſafely ſtruck at; the diverſities about it, the ſcandals given by many that have pretended to it, the Inviſible objects to which it relates; the diſtance we live at from the Ages in which the Miracles that confirmed it were wrought, and the many Impoſtures that have been put upon weak and credulous Multitudes,

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do all afford ſome plauſible appearances, which ſet off with Boldneſs and Scorn, and ſerved up with Mirth and Gaiety, have been fatally ſucceſsful in Poyſoning weak minds that cannot lay many things together, and cannot diſtinguiſh between Truth and the Varniſh of it. But while theſe do thus undermine *Religion*, they ſeem to be mightily in love with *Virtue*, and pretend that it has had great force on Minds upon whom *Religion* had none at all; and that it may maintain its power very well in the Souls of Men, tho they were not over-awed with ſecret Terrours. Whereas in truth, they only hate *Religion* for the ſake of that *Virtue*, which it commands and ſecures: and they could well look on, and let *Religion* bear full ſway in the world, if it conſiſted only in ſome dark Speculations, and outward Performances, and contented with theſe, left men at liberty to do what they pleaſed; they know, and all the World has obſerved it too often, That as ſoon as the Impreſſions of *Religion* are defaced, the ſtrength of *Virtue* is gone: for why ſhould Men reſtrain their Inclinations, bridle their Paſſions, and deny themſelves any pleaſures or advantages, if there is no ſovereign Mind over us, to whom Obedience is due,

due, who will reckon with us, and reward or puniſh us eternally according as we lead that courſe of life here, which he has aſſigned us as our paſſage to Eternity. If there is nothing in *Virtue*, but *decency*, *intereſt*, or *humour*, as theſe are all weak Principles, not able to bear much weight on them; ſo when both *pleaſure* and *advantage* are in the other Scale, they will certainly downweigh them. Hence it is, that all thoſe who go off from a Religious Education, and from the Principles and Practiſes that muſt ſupport it, do ſoon forſake all the ſtrictneſs of Virtue. The fear of God is that Principle alone that can ſanctify and perfect our Nature; the having our Minds full of high and ſublime thoughts of that Supream Being that made and governs the World, together with a juſt ſenſe of his Authority over us, of our obligation to obey all his Laws, and to conform our very thoughts to his Nature and Will, and the framing our whole Lives, and the laying out our whole time, ſo as we may be ever accepted of by him, is the juſt and true notion of the fear of God. If any imagine that it conſiſts only in the having ſome terrible thoughts of God, and of Sin, the performing ſome duties to God as a homage that will pleaſe him,

him, and the looking over paſt Sins with ſome ſad thoughts; and when that is done, if men return to them, and continue in them, and are only now and then a little troubled when they reflect on them, which is all the Notion that the greateſt part, even of thoſe who paſs in the World for Religious, entertain of it, it is no wonder that great advantages are taken to decry Religion it ſelf, when this is believed to be all the effect and power that it has. But the true *fear of God* is a much deeper Principle, and has a more noble effect on all the powers of the Soul; it charms as well as reforms them, and elevates as well as it fortifies them; it follows a man to his Retirements, and there if at any time it humbles him, it does quickly raiſe him up again: it gives him ſolid joys, when he perceives that he carries God's Image upon him, and is reconciled to him; it follows him through the whole buſineſs, and even through the diverſions of Life: It governs his Mind, and guides his Actions, and though the ſound of the Word *Fear* carries terror in it, yet how ſevere ſoever the operation of it muſt be upon ſome occaſions, it generally gives it ſuch a noble ſenſe of the goodneſs, as well as of the greatneſs of God, that it

it becomes a Fear of Reverence tempered with Love, and not a Dread full of Guilt that ſtrikes Horror. Thoſe good Minds that give up themſelves to the Conduct of this *Fear*, and come under its Diſcipline, feel both a Strength in it to govern them, and a Calm in it to ſettle them. If they do truly fear God, it exalts them above all baſe and diſpiriting Fears; So that they fear nothing elſe; all the Accidents of Life and Death it ſelf can give no Terror, where this has once had its true Effect. For a Man that *fears God*, and feels himſelf to be ſo governed by this *Fear*, that he has all Reaſon to conclude he is in his Favour, and under his Protection, is thereby raiſed far above all other Depreſſions; nothing can diſturb him but his apprehenſions of having offended that Goodneſs which he fears: and ſometimes a great Tenderneſs of Mind, joyned with a deep Sence of Duty, will raiſe ſad Reflections in thoſe who have the juſteſt Cauſe of rejoycing always in God. But ſuch cloudy Thoughts, though they may at ſometimes diſquiet them a little, yet have a good Effect on them; they oblige them to great watchfulneſs, and beget in them a particular application to their Duty: and that very Anxiety which was the Effect of their Tenderneſs, and that raiſed ſome melancholly diſtruſt in them con-

cerning their own Condition, ſhews plainly how deep a Root this *Fear* has in them, when ſuch apprehenſions prove ſo painful.

Theſe are the happy Souls that riſe above the World, and all its vain Hopes and Fears, and ſettle their Minds on God, whom they fear and ſerve with their whole Hearts. *A Woman that fears the Lord*, has in her Conſtitution and Method of Life, ſome advantages that help her forward to this Diſpoſition of Mind; and ſhe hath at the ſame time other things that ballance this in her. The Affections of that Sex are more tender, they are leſs hardy and bold; they are under a greater Regularity of Form; *Decency* and *Modeſty* are great Defences: They are not ſo much expoſed to the Temptations that are in the World; they live at home, and do not range abroad; their Children, eſpecially thoſe of their own Sex, give them a conſtant Entertainment, and do commonly carry away much of their Hearts and Time; ſo that they are out of that looſe Ramble, which is the great Corruption of Mankind. But to ballance all this, their Education is not ſo ſtudied, nor ſo laboured, that thereby great Notions, and ſtrong Reaſonings may be formed in them, which give a Foundation to Knowledge and Religion; all which is more commonly laid in the Youth of our Sex.

Sex. The Affections of Women are laid deep in their Natures, ſo that the common Afflictions of Life, eſpecially of a Married State, from the Loſs of Children, or of their Husbands, go farther into their Minds, and ſink, and ſhake them more violently; to which the Decencies of their Griefs, that do, as it were, ſtake them down to it, contribute not a little; which do not allow them the Diverſions to which Cuſtom gives Men a freer and earlier admittance. Theſe are the Advantages and Diſadvantages that they have, with Relation to a Religious Courſe of Life. Upon the whole Matter, it muſt be acknowledged, from the Obſervation of all Ages, that this Sex has produced the Eminenteſt, the moſt Exact, and unblemiſhed, the moſt Charitable and Bountiful, and the moſt Serious and Devout Fearers and Servers of God, that the World has yet had, and that *Religion* has never ſhined brighter than in their whole Deportment. And therefore ſuch Women, eſpecially if they happen to be in an Age in which Libertiniſm and Impiety has not only corrupted our Sex, but has even broke through the Modeſty of theirs, and almoſt made a Rape upon it; and in which all the Exactneſs of Vertue, and the Strictneſs of a Regular Life, has been laughed at, and deſpiſed, as the *Stiffneſs of Form*. I ſay,

in ſuch an Age as ours, *Women* of Rank and Birth, of Quality and Fortune, that in ſpite of a Torrent of Vice, that had got Credit by Great Examples, and had loſt the Senſe of Shame by the Multitude of thoſe that went into it, will ſtill own and practice Religion and Vertue in the ſtricteſt and exacteſt manner ought to be celebrated with juſt Praiſes: And if the Example is ſet by them in ſuch a manner, as not to frighten any from *Religion*, by the mixture of *moroſe Sourneſs*, or by the affectation of *ſingular* or *ſuperſtitious* Practices: If it, on the contrary, is ſhewed in Inſtances that muſt needs recommend *Religion* by the excellent Effects it has, and by the ſoft and gentle manner with which it is managed, then the *Memory* of ſuch a *Woman* ought to be precious, it ought to be honoured with ſuch deſerved Commendations, as are one part, though it be indeed one of the ſmalleſt, of the Rewards that are due unto Vertue. When this is ſo done, that it is viſible Flattery has no ſhare in it, that it cannot corrupt the Perſon that is praiſed, into Vanity or Haughtineſs of Mind, and when the chief Intent of ſuch Praiſes is to ſet forth to the World a freſh Inſtance of the *Power of Religion*, and of its happy Influence upon whole Neighbourhoods, for the incouragement and inſtruction of ſuch as

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chuſe to follow good Patterns, then ſuch Commendations as they, are a piece of Natural Equity and Juſtice; So they may give occaſion to a Noble Emulation, and may offer a more familiar and ſenſible Direction than can be given in Rules or Precepts. I need not add to all this, That no Cuſtom has been more ancient, nor more univerſal among all Civilized Nations than the ſetting forth the Praiſes of the Dead at their Funerals: But indeed theſe have been generally given out ſo laviſhly, and often ſo unjuſtly, that all Diſcourſes of this kind appear with great Prejudices againſt them, and therefore they ought to be ſeverely weighed.

The following Words in my Text give ſuch meaſures, that if theſe be obſerved, all Errors and Exceſſes will be prevented. —*Give her the Fruit of her own Hands*; That is, let her not be praiſed by a pompous ſetting forth of thoſe things that were not her own, ſuch as her Birth and Fortune, which are only the Diſtinctions of Divine Providence, by which Perſons of Noble Minds are ſet in a higher Sphere, and are made capable of giving a more conſpicuous Example, and of being a more general and publick

lick Good to Mankind. Therefore the ſhewing what were the real Inſtances, and the good Effects of her *Religion*, is the moſt proper way of praiſing her: and the leſs Pomp of Eloquence, or Art of Diſpoſition and Expreſſion, that accompanies ſuch a Deſcription, it comes the nearer the Rules that are here given—— *Let her own Works praiſe her in the Gates.* Among the *Jews*, their Courts of Judicature, and other Solemn Aſſemblies, were at their *Gates*: It being judged much ſafer for a City, that the chief place of *Concourſe* ſhould rather be at and about its *Gates*, than in its *Heart* and *Center*: So that by *Gates* we are to underſtand the gathering of the People; and there it was that *her Works* were to *praiſe her*, every one having ſomewhat to ſay, that had either fallen under his own Obſervation, or that had come to his Knowledg: There was no need of an *Orator* to recite them, of a *Poet* to adorn them, or of *Hired Mourners* to ſing them out in doleful Tunes, which were the Methods of thoſe Times: All theſe might well be ſpared, when the Univerſal Senſe of the Town, and the Groans of the Neighbourhood agreed in the ſame Character, and that a *General Lamentation*

tion followed a *Common Loſs*. This is a Panegyrick that can never be ſuſpected; for no Man miſdoubts thoſe Tears that fall upon a real Loſs. When the Widows came to mourn over *Dorcas*, who had been *full of good Works, and Alms-Deeds*, and ſhewed the *Coats and Garments*, which ſhe had not only given them, but *had made for them while ſhe was with them*: Here was a more powerful Strain of Rhetorick than the moſt ſtudied Compoſures. Acts 9. 39.

The reciting the Names, the Vertues and the Sufferings of the Primitive Chriſtians and Martyrs, was in the Firſt Ages of Chriſtianity a great part even of the Office of the *Communion* it ſelf; and the ſtriking the Names of any out of thoſe Regiſters and Memorials, was reckoned to be one of the ſevereſt Acts of the Diſcipline of the Church. It is true, the Abuſes that were uſhered in by this, do well excuſe us, though in this particular we do not conform our ſelves to ſo ancient a Cuſtom; yet when ſingular Inſtances come in our way, as we ought to rejoice to ſee that *Religion* has not yet loſt its force, but can even in this degenerate Age, give Noble Inſtances of the Power

Power it has, and of the Effects that follow it, ſo we ought to ſet it out in its True and Natural Colours. We are not indeed to follow the Steps of a Church, that as ſhe is made up of Lies, ſo lies more impudently in nothing than in dreſſing up the Legends, and ſetting forth the Excellencies of thoſe who have contributed to her enriching, or to her Exaltation, and that does plainly ſhew no regard either to what is true, or to what is ſo much as likely in the Lives, or rather the Fables that are given out of her Saints: In which it is viſible, that no Care is had to tell things truly as they were, but as they think they ought to have been done; and that is managed in ſuch a manner, as may moſt powerfully work on the Credulity or Superſtition of the Age in which they write: They varying the Performances of their *Saints* according to the Taſte of the ſeveral Ages in which they happen to write; and by theſe means they ſerve their Ends of deceiving the World by this Exchange of Sophiſticated Ware, for the wealth and advantages that it brings to them. *But we have not ſo learned Chriſt*, we know no other *Arts* but the plain Simplicity of the Goſpel; we dare not *lye for God*, and much leſs for the beſt Perſon upon *Earth*.

And

And now I am brought back to the Subject with which I began. If we have here before us the earthly Tabernacle of a Woman that *feared the Lord*, then it is juſt and reaſonable for us to *praiſe Her*; but in the praiſing Her, I ſhall ſtrictly obſerve the Direction of my Text, I will only *give her thoſe* Commendations that are due to Her, that are *the Fruit of her Hands*, and will ſet before you ſome of *Her Works*, and leave them to *praiſe Her* by an Eloquence, that will have more Force and Beauty in it, than can be poſſibly put in Words. I will ſay nothing but that which I have good reaſon to believe to be true: for though I had not the honour of ſo particular a Knowledge of Her, as to be able to form out of it an entire Character, yet what I ſaw in Her, ſhewed ſo ſincere and ſo profound a Piety, ſo ſevere and ſcrupulous a Vertue, ſo pure a Conſcience, and ſuch an exact Conduct, that from thence I have good reaſon to believe other Particulars, which I have received from thoſe who have been long the neareſt Witneſſes to the whole Courſe of Her Life.

This I muſt ſay, and you all know it to be true, that both in the Neighbouring City, which is the chief Part of my Care, and in this whole Countrey, She hath had this Character, to have been the greateſt Example, and the Inſtrument of the moſt

Good, of any Perſon that has been in theſe Parts within the Memory of Man.

I will not leſſen what I am to ſay concerning Her, by any account of Her Birth, of the Nobleneſs of her own Family, or of that into which She married, nor of the Greatneſs of the Fortune that deſcended to Her; if I ſhould ſpeak of theſe, I ſhould not *give her the Fruit of her own Hands*; only it is no ſmall part of a Character, that ſuch things can neither ſwell a Mind to Pride, nor diſſolve it into Vanity or Senſuality: Her deſcending to the concerns of the meaneſt Perſons; Her going ſo oft about to the pooreſt Houſes, where Her Charity or Aſſiſtance was neceſſary; Her conſtant care of the Sick; Her ſupplying them ſo plentifully with Medicines from that vaſt Store that She provided for them; Her ſending oft for Phyſicians and Surgeons to them; Her frequent handling and dreſſing their Sores Herſelf, when Surgeons could not be had, which as She never affected to do, ſo She never declined it where it was neceſſary; Her kneeling ſo oft down, and treating Ulcers which were ſo loathſome, that no Charity leſs than Hers, could have endured ſo odious a Sight; Her not being afraid even of contagious Diſeaſes, except that of the ſmall Pox,

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in which Her care of Her Children obliged her to more Caution: All theſe Particulars of which I appeal to you that are before me, how many Inſtances you have ſeen and known, do fully ſhew that Her Rank and Fortune were only conſidered by Herſelf as ſo many Engagements upon Her, to be *rich in good Works, and to be cloathed with Humility.*

But to give you her Character in that which according to my Text gives a juſt Title to praiſe, *She feared the Lord greatly*, ſhe had ſo deep a ſenſe of Religion, that ſhe ſpent a great part of her time both in ſtudying the Holy Scriptures, which ſhe had laid well up in her Memory, and in reading Books both of Devotion and of Inſtruction in Matters of Religion, which ſhe did carefully: thoſe who have attended on her many Years, have aſſured me, that ſhe would not loſe quite that time which was ſet off for her Dreſſing, and which the far greateſt part make to be a ſtudied and lengthened Vanity, but ſhe uſed then, either to read herſelf, or imploy another to do it, that ſo her Mind might have ſome ſhare of that Time, and that it might not go all to her Perſon. She made Extracts out of many Books, but in ſhort-hand, ſince they were only intended for her own or her Chil-

drens uſe; ſhe alſo uſed her ſhort-hand in taking the edifying Parts of Sermons, which ſhe went over in private afterwards with her Children; ſhe was frequent and conſtant in ſecret Prayer, which had been, as ſhe owned to me, the chief Joy and Support of her Life; in that it was that ſhe found Strength to bear the loſs of Six Sons, one after another, all ſhe ever had, and a dear Husband that was more than all: who was ſo dear to her, that with this ſingle Conſideration ſhe quieted her Mind, after the loſs of one Son which happened ſoon after her Lord had recovered of a great Sickneſs, that ſhe could not complain of any thing which God did to her after he had granted her ſo great a Bleſſing. She was a Religious Obſerver of the Lord's-Day, but without Superſtition or Affectation; ſhe never fail'd in a Courſe of many Years while in Health, to lay hold of every opportunity of receiving the Sacrament, and was always retired a day or two before it, and did riſe ever very early on Communion-days, that ſhe might be for a conſiderable time retir'd before ſhe went to Church: She obſerved the daily Returns of religious Performances in her Family in a moſt regular manner, the Prayers of the Church being never diſcontinued, nor ſo much

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as put off. She was conſtant in the Communion of our Church, and had ſo hearty an affection to it, that when ſhe ſaw the danger of our being over-run with Popery, ſhe expreſt her ſenſe of it in the tendereſt manner, and told her Children that ſhe had much rather go with them to a Stake, than ſee them defile themſelves with the Idolatry of the Maſs; yet her Zeal for her Religion did not tranſport her to any uncharitable Exceſſes, and therefore ſhe had a due regard to Vertue and Goodneſs whereſoever ſhe ſaw it. But though all about her ſaw how much Religion poſſeſſed her Thoughts, yet ſhe ſhewed it as little as was poſſible, except where the Obligations of a Mother, or of a Miſtreſs of a Family required it. She took care to have all her Family know and fear God, ſuch as could not read, ſhe allowed them both Time and Books, and other neceſſary Helps for it, and ſhe furniſhed all about her, not only thoſe of her Houſhold, but of the Countrey quite round her, with ſuch Books as might inſtruct and direct them; and as her Modeſty made that ſhe would not aſſume to herſelf to be a Reprover of thoſe that were not under her Authority, ſo the way ſhe took, where ſhe ſaw any occaſion for it, was to ſend them ſuch

Books,

Books, in which they might find the Reproofs that they needed. When ſhe reproved her Servants, thoſe who have been twenty Years about her, have aſſured me ſhe never did it in words of Reproach or Anger, but in the way that ſhe believed was the moſt proper to have a good effect on them. She ſaid, ſhe was naturally paſſionate; but ſhe came to be early under the Power of Religion, and broke herſelf ſo entirely from it, that thoſe who have known her the longeſt, do affirm they never ſaw her at any one time under the Power of it: She was more particularly gentle to thoſe who were immediately about her, ſo that neither her Grief for thoſe great Afflictions, with which it pleaſed God to viſit her, nor the ſharp Pains, nor lingring Diſeaſe of which ſhe died, ever drew an indecent Expreſſion from her.

Her Religion as it gave her much Joy, ſo it gave her ſome Trouble, while by an exactneſs that carried her into too ſcrupulous a Jealouſy of her ſelf; ſhe was too apt to cenſure her own Defects and Coldneſſes. She choſe a proper Guide, to whom ſhe gave frequently an account of the various Scenes of Thoughts that paſſed in her Mind; her choice of one of my Reverend Brethren ſhewed how well ſhe could judg

The Lord Biſhop of Worceſter.

of

of a Perſon fit for ſuch a Confidence, and ſhe had found, as ſhe told me, great Benefit and Comfort in his Conduct. Her Soul was ſo wholly dedicated to God, that ſhe ſeemed to have no other concern upon her, but how to know and to do her Duty upon all Occaſions; and it made even the Burden of her Sickneſs a redoubled Affliction to her, becauſe it depreſſed her Spirits, ſo that ſhe could not raiſe them up to God, with that Chearfulneſs and Joy that ſhe had felt on other Occaſions; and that ſhe did not fly towards Death with ſo entire a willingneſs, as had often formerly inflamed her Thoughts: ſhe thought that even the deſire of ſeeing the laſt part of her Care ſetled and entred into the World, was a concern below that Elevation of Soul with which a Chriſtian ought to entertain the Approaches of Death.

With all this deep Senſe of Religion ſhe had no ſort of Affectation, Singularity, Cenſoriouſneſs, or Sourneſs of Temper; ſhe had all the decent chearfulneſs about her that became her, tho always governed with a ſtay'd Gravity, ſhe affected nothing that made any extraordinary ſhew, ſo that in all indifferent things ſhe lived like thoſe of her Rank. She never placed Religion in little and aſſumed Severities, but ſtu-

died

died in the whole Courſe of her Life, to practiſe that *pure Religion and undefiled with God and the Father, which is to viſit the Widows and the Fatherleſs in their Affliction, and to keep her ſelf unſpotted from the World.* She was free from that Spirit of Cenſoriouſneſs, to which even good People are too prone; perhaps through the ſharpneſs of their Zeal againſt Sin: but when the occaſions of obſerving the Evil that was in the World came in her way, ſhe made the right uſe of them in proper Reflections on them, to thoſe who were under her Care. She loved the Privacies of the Countrey, much more than the Diverſions and Diſorders of the Town: She loved to be at quiet, and to be either improving her own Mind, or to be doing good to others: She had attained to a great underſtanding in the matters of Religion, and the Scriptures; and was not only converſant in the practical, but even in the ſpeculative parts of it. So much ſtudy as ſhe uſed, with ſo true a Judgment as ſhe had, carried her a great way: next to that ſhe ſtudied Phyſick moſt; as that by which ſhe found ſhe had the greateſt opportunities of doing the moſt good; and in this ſhe ſet no bounds to her Care and Labour, and to the expence it drew with it: and in her later

Years

Years the extent of her Charity and the Zeal and Tenderneſs of it grew upon her very ſenſibly; She had obſerved one conſtant Practice, upon any ſpecial Bleſſing that ſhe received from God, to make a particular Largeſs of Charity, beſides her ordinary Givings: but this of late encreaſed to great Sums, that walked round the Jayls of *London*, as well as amongſt the miſerable in theſe Parts; beſides that Riches of her Liberality with which ſhe relieved the *French* and *Iriſh Proteſtants*: So that ſhe ſeemed to be making haſte to do all the good that was poſſible for her, as if ſhe had had a ſecret Intimation that there was but a ſmall Portion of time now before her. A ſlow Decay came to ſeize on her, while ſhe was yet a great way from Old Age, being but Fifty when ſhe died. She quickly apprehended that it would make an end of her, and ſo ſhe ſet her ſelf diligently to prepare for it.

I muſt add one part of her Character, which I think ſo bright a one, that I am not afraid to rank it among thoſe I have already mentioned: She had ſo great a ſenſe of the Goodneſs of God to the Nation in the late happy Revo-

lution, that she said her *Nunc dimittis* with the more Joy, because she had seen that *Salvation which God hath wrought for us*: She paid one Tax to the Government, with so hearty a Zeal, in offering up many earnest Prayers to God for its Establishment, that if many made so many Free-Will Offerings of that kind as she did, we might hope for a better account of all the other Taxes; and a speedy end put to them all: and as she had so true an Affection to this Government her self, so she declared an unalterable Resolution of not bestowing that dear part of her Care, which she did not live to finish, to any but such as she believed were Faithful and Zealous to it.

But now the Melancholy part is yet before me, I unwillingly go to it, but as the Discourse leads me, so I may well speak of it, since it was such as agreed with all that had gone before: she felt the Decays of Nature come so fast on her, that she prepared her self to meet her God: She had quite overcome all that unwillingness which so just a desire, as was formerly intimated, had raised in her: She rejoiced in the Will of God, and expressed so

ſo much ſatisfaction and chearfulneſs even in her Looks, that it plainly appeared all was calm within: She was no more depreſſed with uneaſy Reflections on her ſelf, but had the Joy of a good Conſcience, and the Aſſurance of the Love and Goodneſs of God through Jeſus Chriſt, to ſo high a degree, that ſhe felt not now thoſe unjuſt Cenſures with which ſhe alone had ſometimes puniſhed her ſelf: For ſhe was the only Perſon, that, as far as I have been informed, ever thought hardly of her ſelf. Since I could never hear that ſhe had an Enemy, or that ever a conſiderable Injury was done her by any Perſon; her prudent, grave and unmedling Temper kept her out of the way of making Enemies, and to this was joyned a ſpecial Bleſſing of God, that preſerved her from unjuſt Malice: Thus for meer want of occaſion I could not learn how her Charity would have wrought towards an Enemy that had injured her in any ſort: She continued during the Courſe of her Sickneſs, not only to have the Prayers of the Church ſaid by her, but was very often, indeed almoſt conſtantly, obſerved to be raiſing up her Soul to God: She had reſolved to fit her ſelf for her

laſt Paſſage, with the great *Viaticum* of Chriſtians, but Nature ſunk all at once, and ſo faſt that ſhe could only communicate inwardly; yet though ſhe could not end her Life with that moſt ſolemn Act of Church-Communion, She deſired that Character of dying in the Churches Peace, that is given in *Abſolution*, which ſhe received with much devout Joy: At laſt ſhe broke Priſon, and left a feeble and exhauſted Body, and is now entered into the *Joy of her Lord*, into that *Reſt* to which ſhe was ſo long aſpiring, and of which ſhe had felt ſo many raviſhing Fore-taſtes in her way to it. There ſhe is now, in the Fellowſhip of Angels, and in the Preſence of God, where ſhe will remain, till the reſtitution of all things, that this her now forſaken Body ſhall be changed and be made meet for her to return to it, and to dwell in it for ever.

And for her Memory, *let her own Works praiſe her*, and make her Name to be *as Ointment poured forth*. May all in theſe Parts, that have either obſerved her Deportment, or felt the effects of her Charity, honour her, or rather Religion that made her to be what ſhe truly

ly was, even a publick Bleſſing to the whole Countrey. Look through all the Companies of the gay Libertines, and ſee what you can find among them all compared to that which Religion wrought in her, and then acknowledge that *This is the Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World.* May all that hear of her, riſe up and call her Bleſſed; and by a noble Emulation, ſtudy to imitate the Vertues that ſhined ſo fair in her: May the great Family that is to ſucceed to her Seat, ſo far follow her ſteps, that they may dry up the Tears which do now flow ſo plentifully for her loſs: May her noble Children anſwer the honour of being hers, and the Obligations that lie on them by the Example that they ſaw in her, and the Education that they received from her: And may he whom ſhe loved and eſteemed ſo highly, carry ſtill with him ſo tender a ſenſe of all the excellent Things that he obſerved and admired in her, that according to her laſt Words to him, *Though they are now parted, ſince it was the Will of God that it muſt be ſo, yet they may meet again never to be ſeparated, but to live eternally happy in that Fulneſs of Joy, and in thoſe Pleaſures which are for evermore:*

And

And in concluſion, May the Example ſhe has ſet, and the Good ſhe has done, be ever celebrated; may it recommend true Religion to the World; *Mark the Upright, and behold the Perfect, for their latter End is Peace.* To which God in his Mercy bring us all in his good and appointed Time. *Amen.*

FINIS.